

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES ON A TRIP THROUGH CILICIA

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THESE notes have a very modest purpose. In the spring of 1954 I made a rapid trip through southern Asia Minor, and was particularly impressed by the early Byzantine churches of Cilicia.¹ Having travelled there like any other tourist, I cannot claim to have blazed new trails or to have discovered unrecorded monuments. My intention was simply to obtain a first-hand impression of sites and ruins whose names are familiar to every historian of Byzantine architecture. In the area I visited travel is occasionally strenuous but never really difficult. Accommodations, even when simple, are satisfactory, and most of the roads are good and are being constantly improved by an efficient highway department. Above all, the Turks, in spite of their rapid Westernization, show the Oriental respect for the stranger in their midst. If a traveller has even a modest knowledge of the Turkish language, I am sure he can go anywhere in the country, alone and by public conveyance, without any difficulty. If he lacks this linguistic equipment, then he had better depend on arrangements made by a travel agency, as I did.

Although the account of my trip is of no general interest as a travel narrative, the editors have felt that my photographs and architectural notes may be useful. In assuming even this, they are perhaps too sanguine. The pictures were taken with a 35 mm. camera, which was all I could carry, and I had to be content with the amount and the

direction of the sunlight available when I could get to a monument, sometimes not long before sunset. Likewise, my notes betray that frantic, almost desperate, eagerness which overcomes the architectural historian when he finds himself confronting at last a famous building, hitherto a name and an image in his mind but now standing fairly before him and demanding insistently to be encompassed and recorded. In the following paragraphs, I have kept close to my own impressions, formed on the spot, and have added little comparative material and few bibliographical references. These are literally travel notes and do not pretend to be anything more.

MERIAMLIK

I visited this site with a copy of Herzfeld's and Guyer's survey in my hand and was able to study their conclusions with the actual evidence before me.² Fortunately, there has been no great deterioration of the monuments since their visit in the spring of 1907. The northern half of the apse of St. Thekla's has fallen (fig. 1; cf. Herzfeld and Guyer, figs. 1, 10, 14), but the surviving southern half conveys effectively the grandiose scale of the basilica, which was over 80 m. long. The span of the complete apse was tremendous, no less than 13.60 m., and consequently exceeded that in the great basilica of Arcadius at the City of Menas in Egypt by about

¹ The trip was made possible by a Guggenheim Fellowship granted to me while on sabbatical leave from the University of Michigan. I was accompanied by Mr. Benson Murray and Mr. Faruk Karabey, to both of whom I am deeply grateful for their efficient assistance during the journey.

² Ernst Herzfeld and Samuel Guyer, *Meriamlik und Korykos* (Publications of the American Society for Archaeological Research in Asia Minor. *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, II [Manchester University Press, 1930]). The field work, on which the publication is based, was carried out in the spring of 1907. The architectural surveys and drawings were made by Herzfeld, and Guyer wrote the text with Herzfeld's constant advice (*op. cit.*, pp. xv-xvi).

3 m. The whole of S. Apollinare in Classe at Ravenna could be fitted comfortably into the interior of St. Thekla's (*op. cit.*, pp. 8-11, 17). Such vast size, combined with the excellence of the construction, suggests that Guyer's first opinion, which he discusses and finally rejects, may be correct and that the church was actually built soon after 476 by the Emperor Zeno to commemorate a victory (*id.*, pp. 31-32). The surviving fragment still has a magnificence appropriate to imperial patronage. As to the cave under the church, unfortunately the entrance is now completely blocked so that I could not visit the chapel constructed there before the great basilica was built above it (*op. cit.*, pp. 38-46).

A short distance to the north of the apse of St. Thekla's lies a well preserved cistern. Since Herzfeld and Guyer provide only rough sketches of this interesting structure (*op. cit.*, figs. 74-76), two photographs of it are shown herewith (figs. 2, 3). Guyer's proposed date for it, based on the character of decorative details, seems reasonable; indeed, its style bears the stamp of the first half of the sixth century (*id.*, p. 80). Consequently, it is a valuable witness to the interplay of architectural influences in the reign of Justinian. As far as the capitals and stilt blocks are concerned, we might feel we were peering into some sixth-century cistern under Istanbul. Normally, however, such a cistern would be vaulted in brick rather than cut stone. Moreover, the absence of brick in our Meriamlik vault cannot be attributed to unavailability of that material, since it has been employed extensively in the substructure. The assurance and competence with which this stone tunnel vault has been turned suggest, rather, that it is the result of a firmly established local tradition. Perhaps the sixth-century architectural style of Constantinople was less exclusive and less overriding than we are apt to think, on the basis, for example, of the church at Kaşr Ibn Wardân, and was

more capable of adapting itself to the traditions of other localities than we have realized. One of the fascinations of that century for the architectural historian is its development of undulant, plastic canopies, lightly fashioned of brick and thrown over space like a textile with fabulous legerdemain, in contrast to older traditions of massive stonework, ponderous woodwork, and cautious routines of structural procedure. The cistern at Meriamlik is a significant example of the interplay between these tendencies in the middle ground of southern Asia Minor.

About 150 m. north of St. Thekla's lies the ruined structure which Guyer calls the "Cupola Church" (*id.*, pp. 46-74). Since he does not include a panoramic view of it, my photograph is reproduced herewith (fig. 6; cf. fig. 4). Any reader who is accustomed to regard this church as an important point of reference for the development of Byzantine domical structures may share my own disappointment in the meager amount of evidence actually available to support such a view. Guyer confidently asserts that the great square bay, ca. 10.60 x 10.65 m. in plan, which adjoins the main apse, was originally covered by a stone dome *völlig ausser Zweifel* (*id.*, pp. 61-62).

To be sure, the ruin has suffered depredations since 1907 and, as a result, some of his evidence may have been destroyed. Thus, the large pier on the right of figure 6 is shown in Guyer's figure 64 as it looked when it still retained its ashlar facing and carried fragments of the nave arcade and of the tunnel vault over the south aisle.³ Its facing and voussoirs have now disappeared, leaving only the shapeless rubble core of the pier. Yet Guyer's photograph shows that

³ His photograph shows that the nave arcade sprang from the same level as the aisle tunnel vault. Consequently, the nave arcade penetrated the tunnel. Such a complication, which would necessitate elaborate stereotomy, testifies to the competent tradition of tunnel vaulting in the region.

it stood no higher in his day than at present, so that it could hardly have yielded him evidence about the upper parts of the church. On the basis of various fragmentary architectural details found in his excavations, he concluded that galleries had once existed over the aisles (*id.*, p. 60). Even if they had not existed and even if there had been no clerestory, the base of any dome would have been above the top of the surviving pier and, at most, the spring of a supporting pendentive might have left some trace thereon. No such trace is visible now, and evidently Guyer could see none, because he says there was no way to determine how the transition from his proposed dome to its square plan might have been managed (*id.*, p. 62). Indeed, the only evidence he offers for the very existence of a dome is the outline of the plan which his excavations revealed (fig. 4). To him, this is conclusive — there must have been a massive masonry dome above such massive supports — and he firmly rejects any comparison to the wooden pyramid which must have covered the corresponding bay of the church at Alahan Kilisse (*id.*, pp. 61–62).

In my opinion, such reasoning is not at all conclusive and the comparison to Alahan Kilisse seems very appropriate (figs. 8, 13). The latter has, of course, certain features which are not found in the Meriamlik church, namely a choir bay, a small apse terminating each aisle, and nave columns prefixed to the two western piers of the nave arcade; and the Meriamlik church, in turn, possesses more closely spaced nave supports and, above all, is distinguished from Alahan Kilisse by the four massive corner piers which define its eastern bay. Such differences can be regarded, however, as mere local variants within one basic concept of a church plan as a large square box containing a smaller box which is more or less square and is placed against the eastern side of the large box so as to be near the main apse.

In the case of Alahan Kilisse, at least, the smaller box is a tower-like nucleus around which the rest of the church is disposed in subsidiary fashion. Since the plan of the Meriamlik church suggests a similar superstructure and since there is little doubt that the Alahan Kilisse tower was capped by an octagonal wooden roof which rested on corner niches supported, in turn, by colonnettes on decorated brackets, we are entitled to believe that our church at Meriamlik, being of similar plan and located in the same region, was crowned by a wooden pyramid also — not by a dome. The heavier substructure at Meriamlik can be explained by the tunnel vaults over the aisles, without any need to conjecture a masonry dome above them. Curiously enough, Guyer himself came close to associating the two churches when he noted that certain corbels decorated with animal and bird forms, which he dug up in the Meriamlik church, were similar in size and style to those still in position at the top of the Alahan Kilisse tower (figs. 32, 33, 35). So obsessed was he by the notion of a dome on the church at Meriamlik, however, that he finally rejected the implications of his corbels on the ground that they were too small to support the great weight of a dome and must, therefore, have come from some other part of the building. Domes seem to have an irresistible attraction for some architectural historians.

Guyer was inclined to attribute the construction of the "Cupola Church" at Meriamlik to the Emperor Zeno in about 476 and to date its neighbor, St. Thekla's, a few years earlier (*id.*, p. 32). In any case both churches can be assigned with reasonable assurance to the second half of the fifth century.

KORYKOS

The above-mentioned volume by Herzfeld and Guyer served me as a guidebook here also. Fortunately no

great alterations have occurred since their visit to Korykos, although their trenches have silted up, so that the floor mosaics and other details revealed by their excavations are no longer visible. My photographs are intended merely as amplifications of their descriptive material. In particular, their pictures do not give an adequate impression of the church they call the "Tomb Church *extra muros*," and I was unprepared to find it as large – and as problematical – a building as it actually is. Figure 7 is a general view of its interior (cf. fig. 5). On the right is the southernmost of the three eastern apses. At the extreme left is one of the piers belonging to the ruined square structure which occupies the middle of the church, and which Guyer believes to have been a free-standing Christian tomb, or martyrium, before the present complex was erected around it (*id.*, p. 130). The pier, surmounted by a broad capital, is at the southwest corner of the supposed tomb. Since the corresponding capital at the left center of the photograph marks the northwest corner of the same structure, one can readily realize how large an area was covered by its square plan. Guyer, in his effort to reconstruct its original appearance, assumes that each of its faces was pierced by a great arch springing from the broad capitals (*id.*, pp. 127–129). Also, since the excavations revealed exedras rounding out from the eastern and western arches, he conjectures that similar ones projected north and south, although no trenches were sunk to verify this assumption. The western exedra was columnar, but the eastern one consisted of a continuous curved wall like an ordinary apse. Guyer believes that the northern and southern exedras were columnar like the western one. He imagines the square central space as being covered originally by a pyramidal wooden roof, perhaps supported at the corners by niches placed diagonally, and assumes that the exedras were surmounted by

half domes. He offers no suggestion as to how the three open exedras would have been housed-in while the structure was still – according to his theory – an independent tomb.

In a second phase, the tomb would have been encased by the present church as an expression of the cult which had developed around the bodies of the saints buried there (fig. 5). The western exedra was incorporated into a double-aisled space running north and south. The hypothetical northern and southern exedras would have been enclosed in oblong rooms, from each of which projected eastward a narrow chamber terminated by an apse and flanked by an even narrower space, having the proportions of a mere corridor. The area between the two apsidal chambers was left originally as a small open court east of the main apse which opened directly on to the central square. Of this fact there can be no doubt; the main apse was moved eastward to its present position only at a later date (*op. cit.*, pp. 133–137). Finally, the plan was completed by a handsome atrium on the west.

Most of the superstructure can be restored in imagination without difficulty. On the basis of surviving evidence, Guyer shows that the narthex was surmounted by a gallery whose eastern wall was pierced by three windows that opened into the two transverse aisles inside the church (*id.*, pp. 131–132). The arch springs of two of these windows are visible in figure 7. Access to this gallery was provided by a stair at the north end of the narthex, as indicated by several steps which were found still in place. Evidently, the two transverse aisles rose to the full height of the church and were not covered by galleries. The rooms which flank the central square – the supposed tomb – on the north and south were disconcerting to Guyer because holes for floor beams are apparent in the north wall (fig. 7), yet they are at so low a level that beams in-

served horizontally in them could not possibly clear the top of the great arch and of the exedra which he supposes to have existed on this north flank of the tomb. He is driven to conjecture that the beam holes are due to some later reconstruction (*id.*, p. 133). As to the two apsidal rooms projecting eastward, he is in doubt as to whether they supported upper rooms from the beginning, although it is certain that they did so after the central apse was moved eastward to its present position (*id.*, p. 137).

I have dwelt on the "Tomb Church *extra muros*" at length because it is an important and unusual example, and because I venture to disagree rather radically with Guyer's interpretation of it. To my mind, there is no reason whatever to believe that it consists of a tomb, originally free-standing, which acquired sanctity, and was finally incorporated as a cult object into a church. Such developments did occur, notably in the first Church of St. John at Ephesus, but I found no convincing evidence for a similar evolution here. The only proof Guyer offers is the presence of two sarcophagi in the central square (*id.*, pp. 129-130), but he gives no evidence as to their date or relation to the structure. They may have been set in place long after the church was built.

Likewise, it is a pure assumption that the western exedra and its curved row of columns were repeated on the north and south sides of the central square, since no excavations were made in these areas. I believe it is Guyer's faith in the pre-existence of a tomb, presumably of central plan and therefore a quatrefoil, which leads him to such a conjecture. The available evidence, however, tends strongly against it. If the north and south exedras were of the same size as the western one, each of them would have curved out to a point considerably less than 3 m. from a principal side door of the church (fig. 5). Since the doors swung inward, as indicated by the sur-

living jambs, the clearance between them and the supposed north and south exedras would have been only 1.50 m. Such congestion around the principal center of a great church is unbelievable. Moreover, the beam holes in the north wall, whose evidence Guyer repudiated because the north exedra could not be fitted under a floor at such a level, appeared to me to be absolutely contemporary with the wall. If we accept all this evidence, and consequently abandon Guyer's quatrefoil tomb plan, the solution seems quite obvious: a triple arcade on two columns, spaced like those in the western exedra but arranged in a straight line, will fill the northern and southern openings in the square almost exactly and will fit comfortably below the indicated floor level. Surely, the square core of the church was erected at the same time as the rest of the building and was flanked by exedras only on the east and west. Consistency of masonry technique and of wall thicknesses seemed to me to indicate that the whole church is the product of one building campaign. This opinion appears to be confirmed by a comparison between decorative details of the core and of the surrounding structure (figs. 22, 23).

Finally, the galleries to north and south of the central square would have been accessible if one admits that the two apsidal rooms on the east always carried galleries above them, and we are entitled to believe that they always did so, because the two narrow spaces flanking the apsidal rooms are best explained as corridors to house long ramps or flights of stairs. It is unfortunate, as Guyer himself admits, that neither of these rooms was excavated (*id.*, p. 135 n. 1). Evidence of stairs might have been found in them.

Viewed as a whole, the plan of the "Tomb Church" is unlike our usual idea of a church. It suggests, rather, a domestic complex composed of numerous apartments to which individuals pene-

trate, passing through many doors and ascending narrow stairs. No space, no axis dominates; there is no openness; and the group is enclosed by a forbidding wall like a compound. The seven outer doors seem designed to admit individuals, one at a time, and no great portal welcomes a populace. The general effect of the plan is monastic in the extreme. This great church seems more suited to the needs of a laura than a parish, more expressive of private devotions than of congregational worship.

Apart from its overall effect of compartmentation, the plan is not as novel as it might appear to be at first glance. Most of its elements and dispositions can be found in other churches of that period in Cilicia. In discussing the "Cupola Church" at Meriamlik (fig. 4), we have noted that its plan is essentially a large square containing a smaller square, or nucleus, which adjoined the main apse, was flanked by aisles, and was apparently distinguished from the rest of the building by an important superstructure of some kind, perhaps a wooden pyramidal roof resting on corner niches. Basically, this was the original scheme of our church at Korykos, the principal differences being that its western half consists of a two-aisled transverse area rather than a short nave and side aisles and that its nucleus has a western apse. The two-story narthex certainly recurs in the region, for example at Cambazli⁴ and Alahan Kilisse.⁵ Similarly, the original east end of the "Tomb Church," with a plan resembling a trident because of the two projecting apsidal chambers and the open court between them, is much like St. Thekla's at Meriamlik and appears at Korykos itself, in the church which Guyer calls the "Transept Church

extra muros" (*id.*, fig. 109). For the central square with exedras at the ends and arcades on the sides, I find no nearby parallels. It is interesting, however, that this is the basic scheme of St. Sophia at Constantinople. Guyer attributes our church in Korykos to the middle of the sixth century (*id.*, pp. 148, 150). In that case, the two churches would be contemporary.

ALAHAN KILISSE⁶

One of the unforgettable moments of my trip was that which I experienced when, after clambering up pine clad slopes, I first saw this famous church, glowing with tawny warmth in the morning sun and beckoning to me. Its situation, high on a shoulder of mountain, is magnificent, and the monastic group clings to the rocky contours, giving the impression of a Christian Delphi (figs. 8-10).⁷ By cutting back the ledges on one side and erecting a retaining wall on the other, the builders have created a long narrow terrace which overlooks the valley of the Calycadnus River and the barren lower slopes of the Taurus Range beyond it. Along the top of the retaining wall ran a portico entered from the west by a monumental arch and terminated at the eastern end by the narthex which gave entrance to the church. Near the midpoint of this once handsome promenade, there still stands an unusual pier with a niche (fig. 14). Whether it was a shrine or an offering table to invite the generosity of passersby, one cannot tell.⁸ The purpose

⁶ This site is variously referred to in publications as "Alahan Monastir" and "Koja Kalessi." After careful inquiry in the vicinity, Mr. Karabey ascertained that "Alahan Kilisse" is the name by which it is known locally.

⁷ Fig. 8 is from plate 1 in Arthur C. Headlam, *Ecclesiastical Sites in Isauria (Cilicia Trachea)* (The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies. Supplementary Papers, 2 [London: Macmillan & Co., 1893]).

⁸ This little structure is interesting from the standpoint of iconography and of architectural ornament. The three arches within the niche contain figures. Although they are badly

⁴ Josef Keil and Adolf Wilhelm, *Denkmäler aus dem rauhen Kilikien* (Publications of the American Society for Archaeological Research in Asia Minor. *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, III [Manchester University Press, 1931]), p. 38, pl. 19.

⁵ Fig. 15.

of the portico itself, however, is perfectly clear. It was a splendid approach, a sacred way, to lead pilgrims from the public entrance of the area to the church which was their destination, and it guaranteed the privacy of the monastic establishment that lay behind it, along the face of the rock.

The caves at the western end of the site suggest chthonian cults and add a somber, primitive note to the general effect of the group. I suspect that excavations in these caves would reveal prehistoric, perhaps Stone Age, layers to which the local tradition of sanctity might be traced, long before Christianity. Perhaps they were the refuge of Christian hermits before the church and monastery were erected. Many little niches have been cut into the cave walls, giving the effect of a columbarium, and a small apse has been hollowed out of the eastern face in such a way as to suggest a grotto chapel. The little niches may have been for offerings; they were far too small for Christian burial, at least.

Next to the caves is a portal, at left in figure 8. It stands on the longitudinal axis of the principal monastic building, and was evidently the main entrance thereto. Its lintel and jambs are still in place, but the walls that once adjoined it have fallen (figs. 18-21).⁹ The outer face, toward the west, is richly decorated with architectural ornament and with five busts: one on each jamb, one at the center of the lintel, and one at each end of it. The central one represents Christ in a medallion borne by two angelic fig-

eroded, a cursory examination suggests that the central one is the Virgin, seated and holding the Child on her right arm, and that she is attended by a standing figure in each of the adjoining niches. In the corners above the gable are flying victories, rather than angels, and below them are birds like those in figs. 20, 21, 24. The arch-in-gable motif is reminiscent of the contemporary architecture in Syria.

⁹ Fig. 18 is taken from Headlam because the sun had set before I could photograph the same view. I had only one day at Alahan Kilisse.

ures, each having six wings. The faces of the jambs beneath the lintel are carved to represent shallow niches in which stand winged figures wearing short tunics. The southern figure stands above what Laborde in 1826 thought was a human bust (fig. 21).¹⁰ The northern one, according to Laborde, stood likewise, although the surface under its feet is now completely shattered (fig. 20). The gaze of each figure is focussed downward, as if in triumph over the bust below it, and they may well represent Michael and Gabriel. On the soffit of the lintel is an elaborate composition which is quite well preserved because of its protected position (fig. 19). At each end a small figure stands beside a tree or vine, and between them is an energetic whorl of wings from which protrude a human bust and the fore parts of a lion, an eagle, and an ox, all clearly identifiable. Being placed immediately below the bust of Christ on the face of the lintel above, this central group may represent the symbols of the Evangelists, yet the sculptor has been at such pains to tie these disparate elements into a unit, as if members of a single body, that one is tempted to interpret it as a rather skillful effort to represent the Tetramorph of Ezekiel. Whatever may be the correct interpretation of the parts of the sculptural ensemble on the doorway, its general intent is clear. It represents an apocalyptic vision of Christ's triumph and is a striking forerunner of Romanesque portals in the West.

The doorway opened originally into a porch, now totally collapsed, beyond which extended a long, enclosed space ending in a hemicycle. Probably this was the central hall of the monastery. On one side I observed a fragment of a pier, still in place, with a half column on its inner surface. The implication is that the hall was flanked by one or more arches, or even by complete arcades, and that these openings, or arcades, were enriched by

¹⁰ Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. 10, n. 3.

applied colonnettes. South of the hall, there was evidently a suite of rooms, as indicated by several windows and an important door in the southern façade of the building (fig. 16). The hemicycle was not, as I assumed at first, a simple apse terminating the hall, but was pierced by a double doorway, the three jambs of which may still be discerned (fig. 9). Seemingly, this portal, which gave access to the large open area east of the building and to the church beyond, was combined with the hemicycle to form an imposing preface to those important elements of the monastic group. A similar motif is found in the church, where the aisles end in niches pierced by doors.

Unfortunately, the superstructure of the monastic building is so completely destroyed that we can only conjecture its original height and arrangements.¹¹ Due to the steep slope of the site, the southern wing of the building evidently descended one story lower than the central hall, and a great horizontal cutting against the face of the cliff suggests that a northern wing stood at an even higher level. We can picture the original building as descending in steps, which would permit the central hall to receive light through a clerestory on its south side. The projecting pavillion which lies southeast of the hall and seems to overlook the whole area—very likely it was the abbot's residence—would have provided a vertical accent to terminate the descending terraces of the building, which must have been a handsome composition of gleaming architectural forms, set off against the rustic cliff and grottoes behind it.

The large area enclosed on three sides by the monastic building, the church, and the southern portico is now thickly covered with tangled shrubs and fallen

stones. On its northern side is a small cave, visible at the upper center of figure 10, which is lined with niches similar to those previously mentioned. Farther east, a line of tombs was also cut into the cliff. At a spot in the western part of the area and just behind the portico stands a badly ruined square structure, whose plan suggests a double chapel or tomb (top center of fig. 8). Since it could be entered from the portico, very likely it was one of the attractions for pilgrims. As to other buildings and arrangements in the enclosed area, much clearing and some excavating would be necessary before valid conclusions could be drawn.

The culmination of the group at Alahan Kilisse is, of course, the great church at its eastern end (figs. 11–13, 15, 17, 24–27, 30, 32–36, and text fig., p. 231). Ever since 1893, when Headlam published his description and survey of the building, it has been a subject for dispute among architectural historians.¹² The problem is whether its great tower was originally crowned by a dome. Headlam himself did not think so, and I venture to say, even at the risk of sounding dogmatic, that any architect who visits the church will dismiss the idea from his mind. Surely the tower was not designed for a dome and was never covered by a vault of any kind. For one thing, Headlam noted that no fragments of such a structure can be found among the debris in the church. Even more convincing is the fact that the main body of the tower, far from having the massive walls needed to support a dome with a span of 6 m., is remarkable for its structural lightness, which amounts almost to delicacy. In particular, its walls

¹² For Headlam's publication, see footnote 7. For a recent account see M. Gough, "Early Churches in Cilicia," *Byzantinoslavica*, XVI (1955), pp. 201 ff., especially pp. 206 ff., and pls. 4–6. After my ms. had been completed a new monograph on Alahan Kilisse came to my attention, the results of which I was not able to make use of: P. Verzone, M. Usman, G. E. Bean, and E. Yalkin, *Alahan Manastiri Mimarisli Uzerinde bir Inceleme* (Istanbul, 1955).

¹¹ All destruction at Alahan Kilisse appears to be due to natural causes. I saw no nearby habitations or settlements which could have been built of materials pilfered from it.



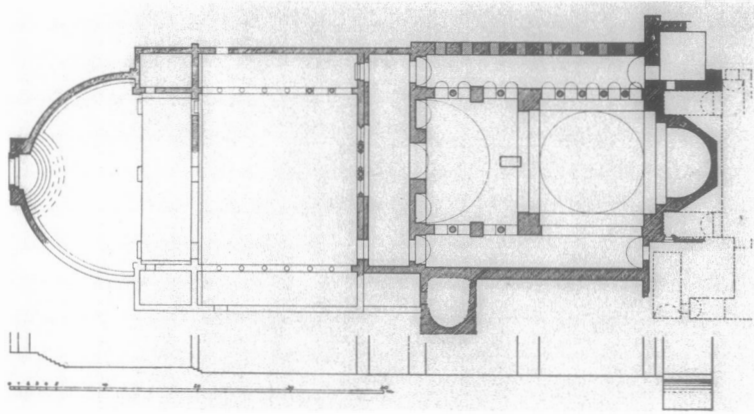
1. Meriamlik. Church of St. Thekla.
Southern half of main apse



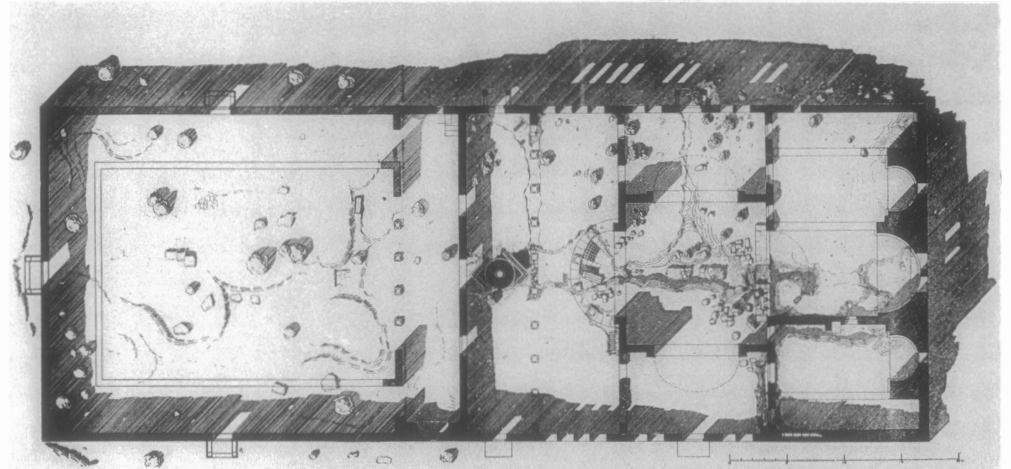
2. Meriamlik. Cistern situated north of Church of St. Thekla.
East tunnel vault seen from south



3. Meriamlik. Cistern situated north of Church of St. Thekla, seen from southwest



4. Meriamlik. Restored plan of "Cupola Church"



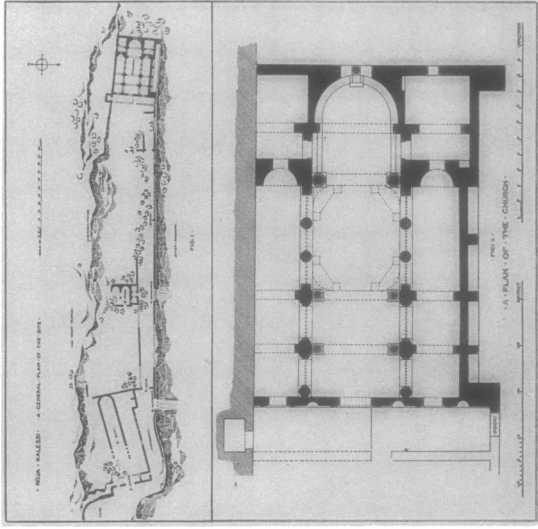
5. Korykos. Plan of "Tomb Church *extra muros*"



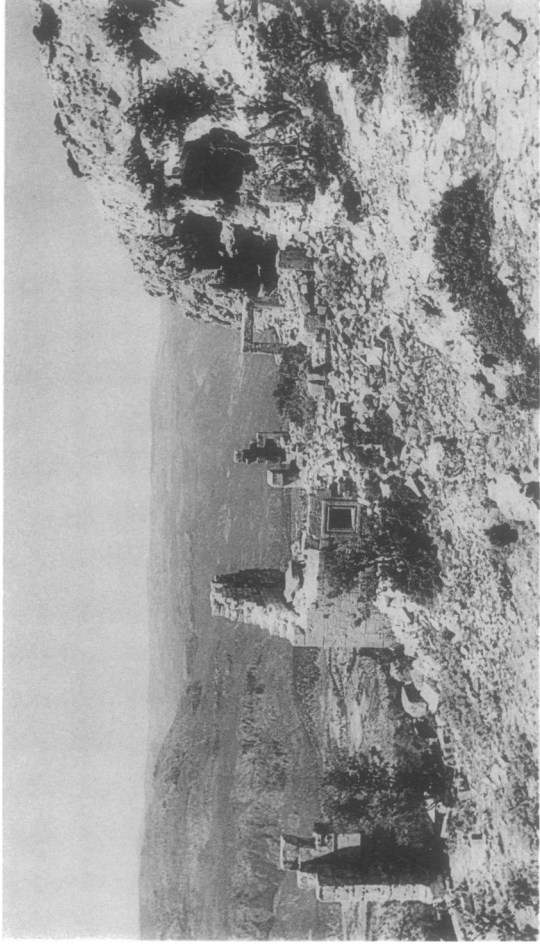
6. Meriamlik. Ruins of "Cupola Church," looking from southwest corner toward northeast corner (standing figure). At left, pier on north side of nave; at right, pier at southwest corner of square choir. Wall in rear is modern



7. Korykos. "Tomb Church *extra muros*," looking northwest from southeast corner



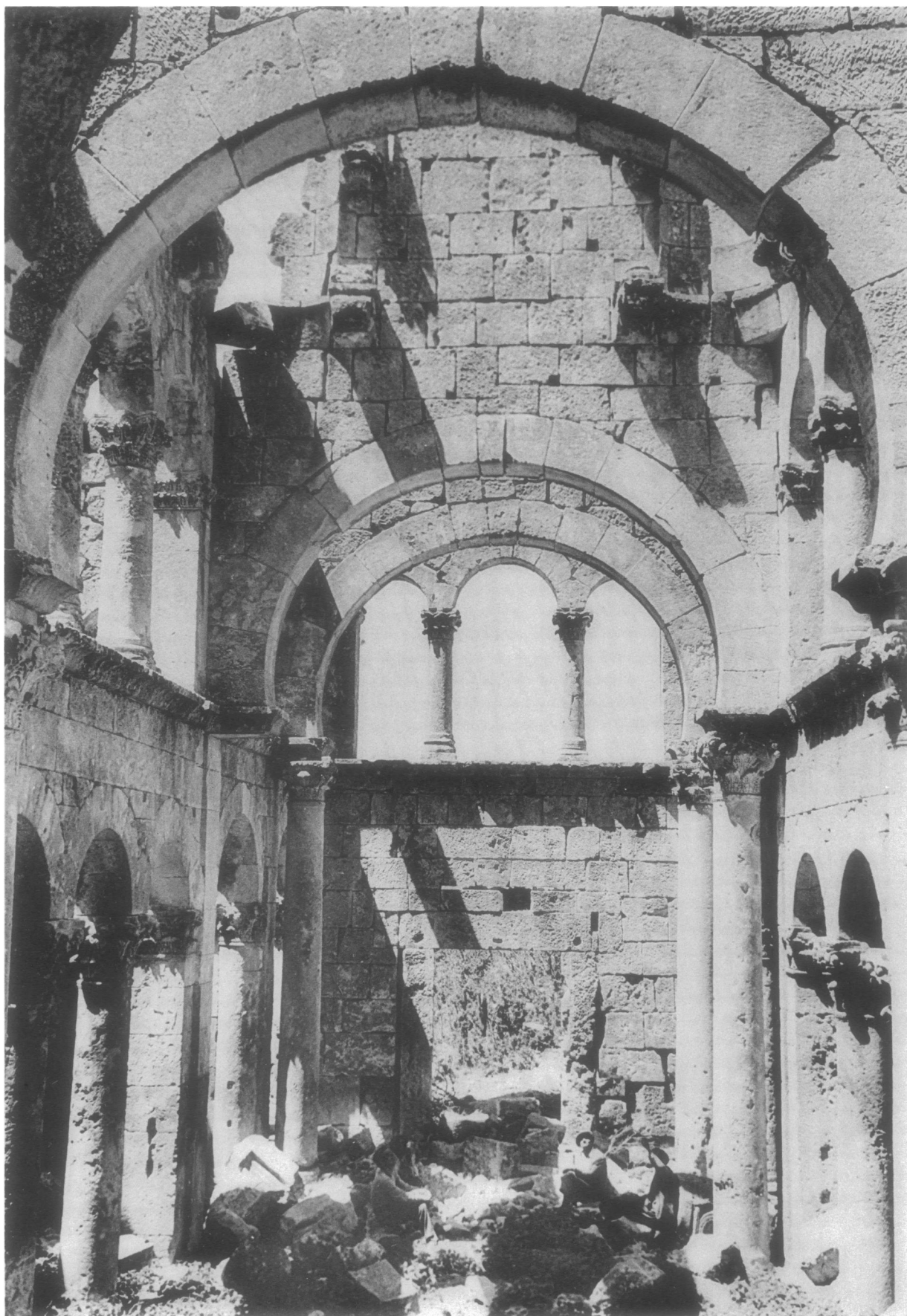
8. Alahan Kilisse. Plan of group and of main church



9. Alahan Kilisse. Entrance to portico (left) and monastic building, looking west



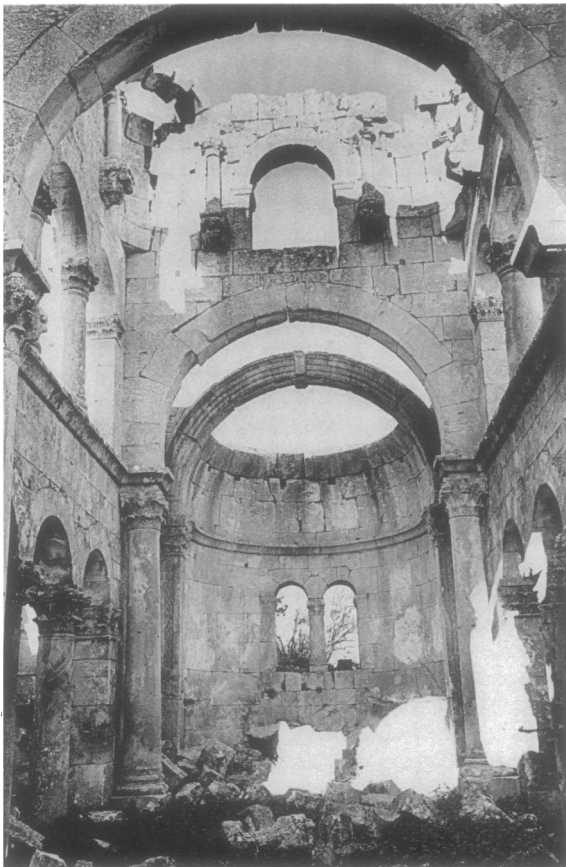
10. Alahan Kilisse. General view, looking northwest (corner of church on right)



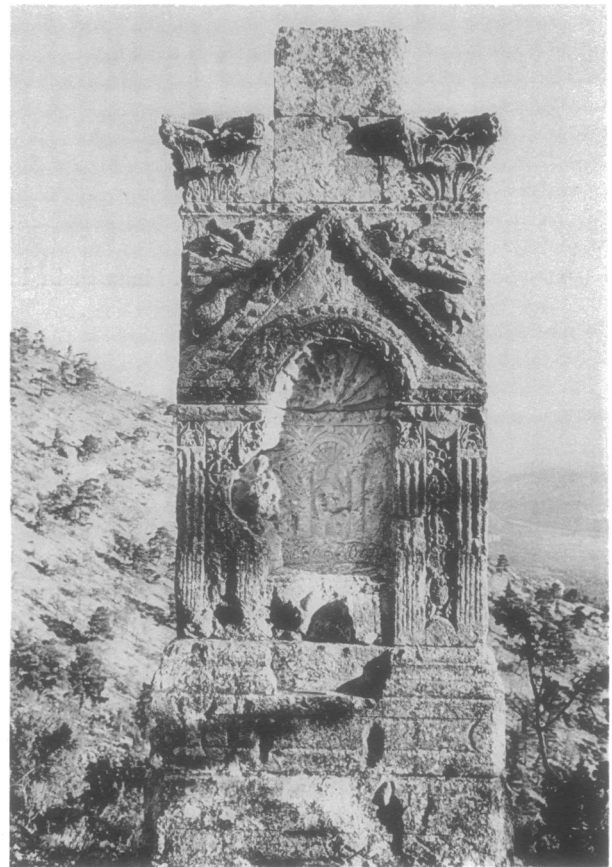
11. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Interior, looking west



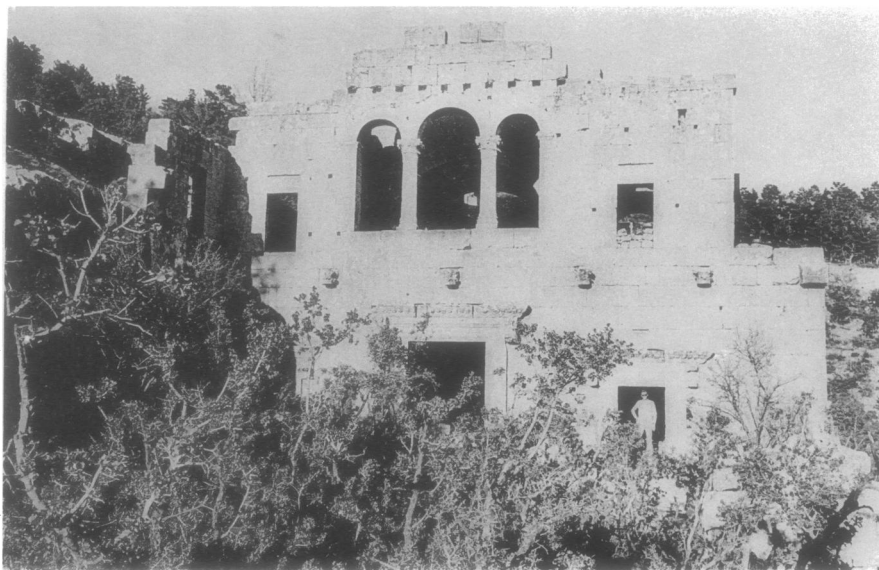
12. Alahan Kilisse. Church from southeast



13. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Interior, looking east



14. Alahan Kilisse. Shrine on south terrace wall, near center (cf. figs. 8, 10)



15. Alahan Kilisse. Church. West façade



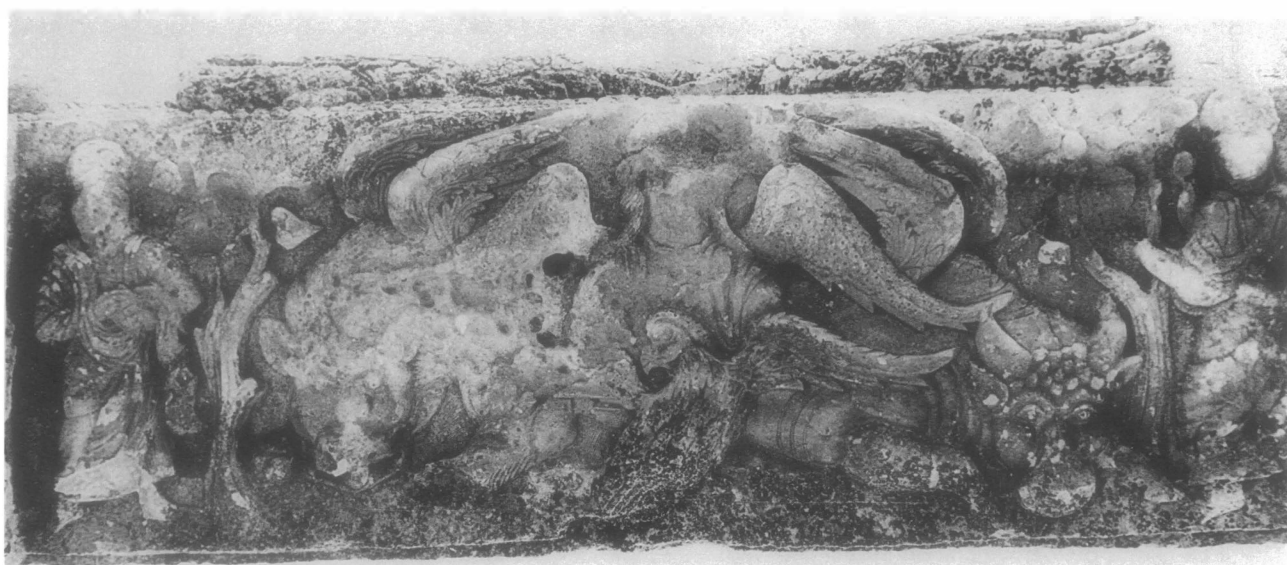
16. Alahan Kilisse. Monastic building. South façade, looking northwest



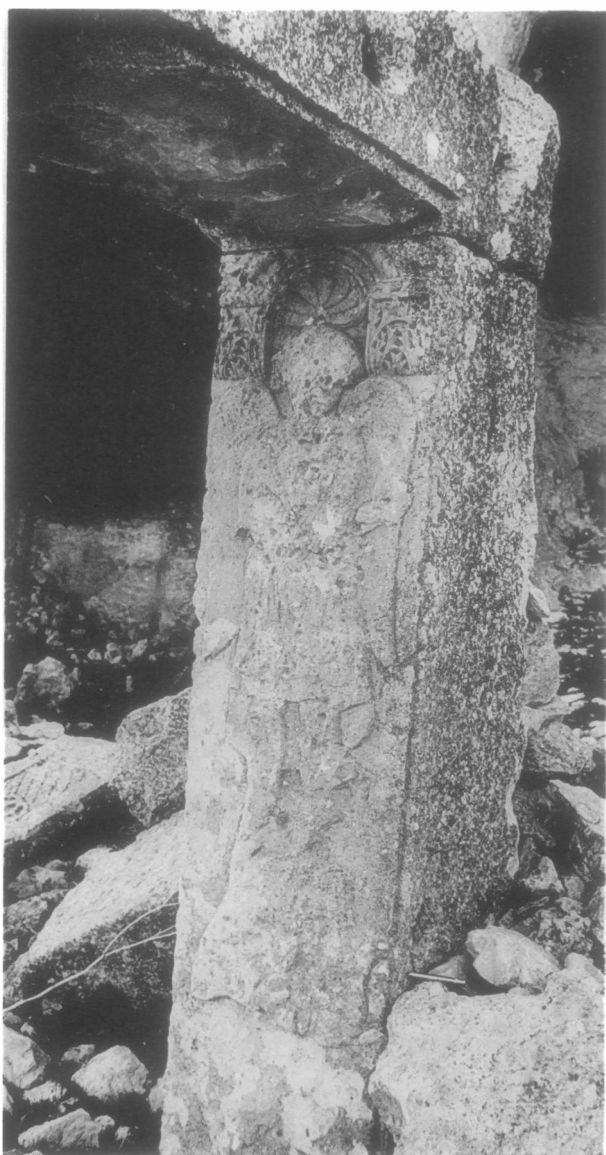
17. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Base lying under north arcade of nave



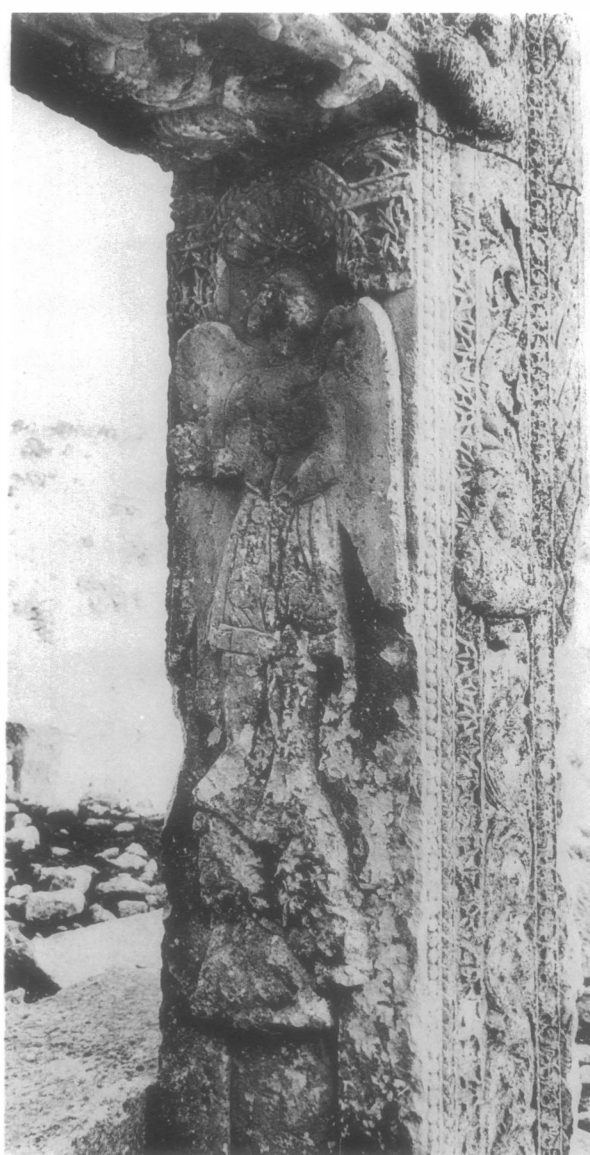
18. Alahan Kilisse. Main entrance to monastic building (at left on fig. 8), looking southeast



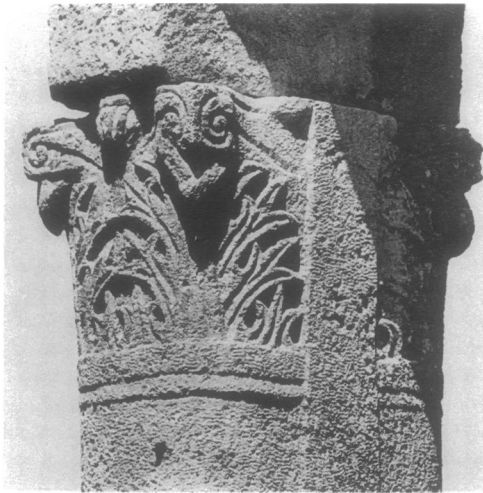
19. Alahan Kilisse. Main entrance to monastic building. Soffit of lintel (cf. fig. 18)



20. Alahan Kilisse. Main entrance to monastic building. North jamb, looking northwest (cf. fig. 18)



21. Alahan Kilisse. Main entrance to monastic building. South jamb, looking southeast (cf. fig. 18)



22. Korykos. "Tomb Church *extra muros*." Detail of capital in double window in north aisle



23. Korykos. "Tomb Church *extra muros*." Detail of capital at left center of fig. 7



24. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Capital under northwest corner of tower



25. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Capital at south side of main apse



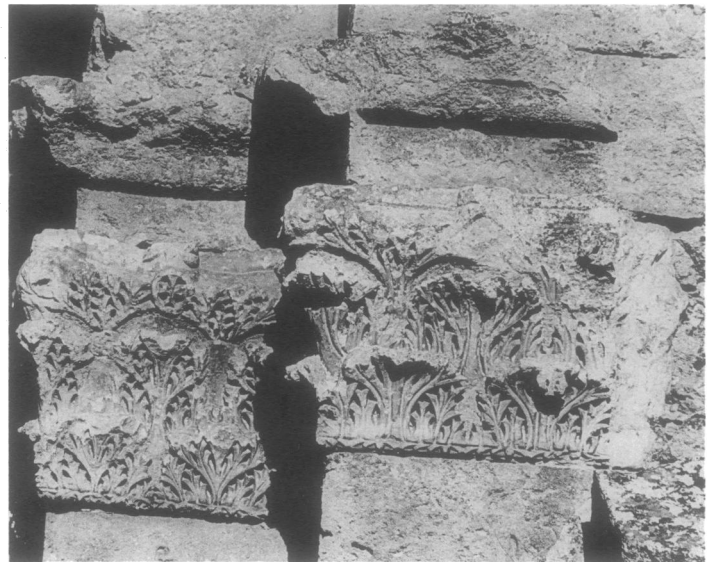
26. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Capital under southeast corner of tower



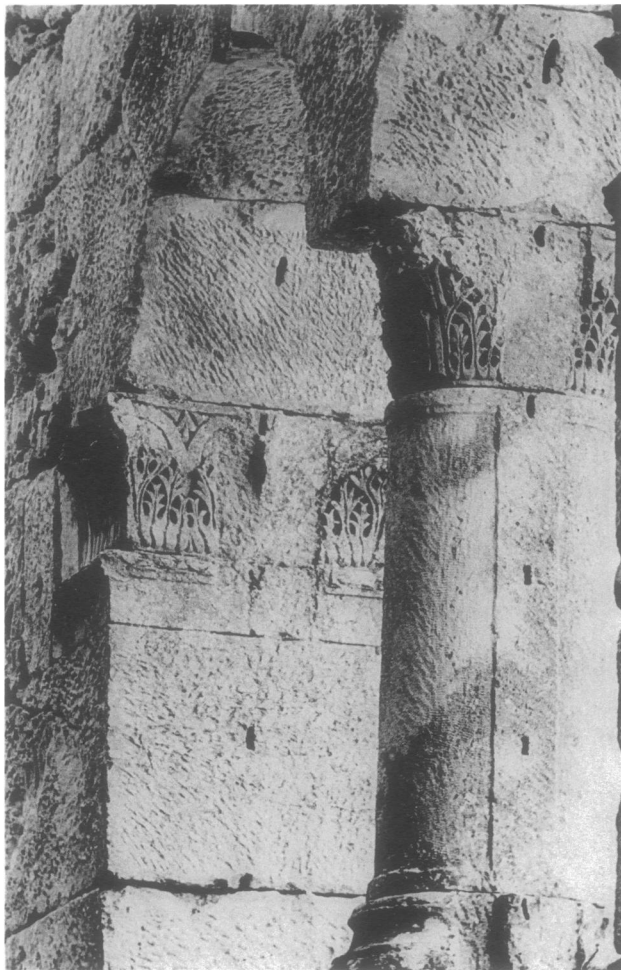
27. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Capital at west end of gallery over north aisle



28. Dag Pazarli. Church. Capital at east end of southern nave arcade



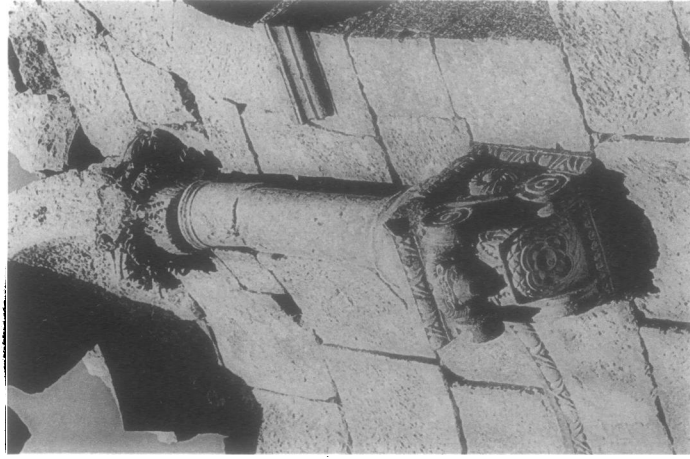
29. Dag Pazarli. Church. Capitals at south side of main apse



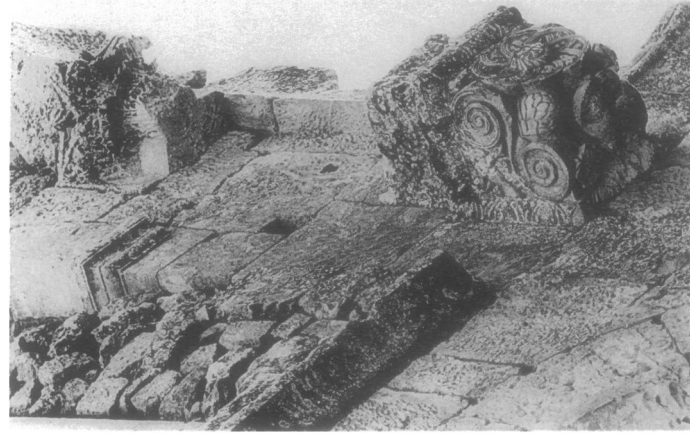
30. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Double window in south aisle, from interior



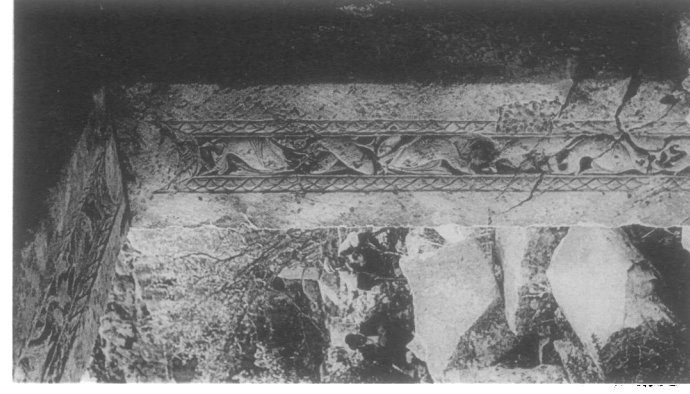
31. Dag Pazarli. Church. Column in double window of main apse



32. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Column under niche in northeast corner of tower



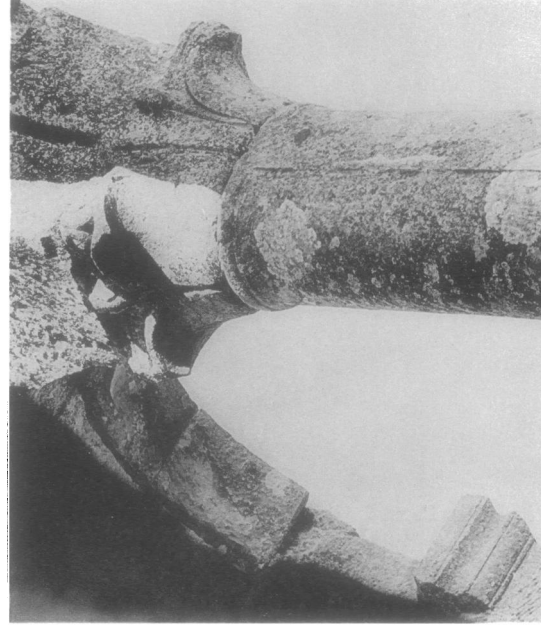
33. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Bracket and capital under niche in southwest corner of tower



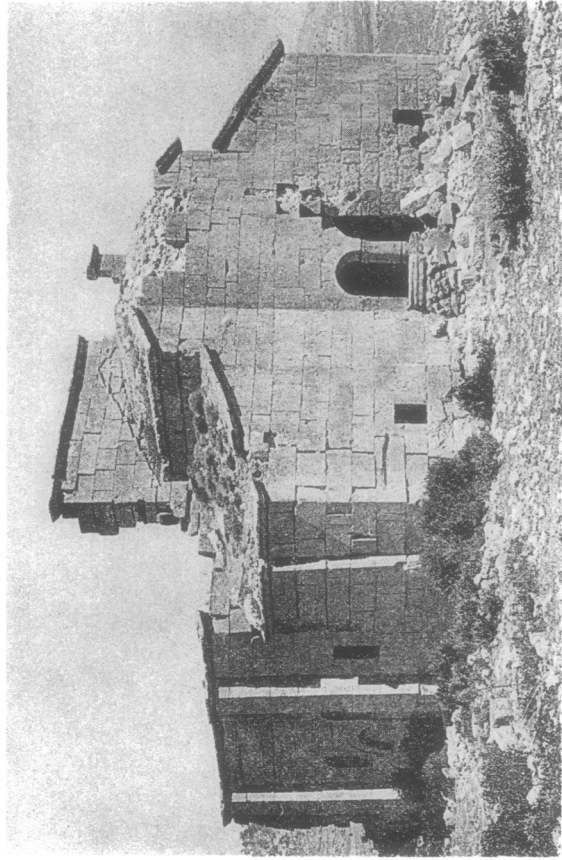
34. Alahan Kilisse. Church. North jamb of southernmost door in west façade



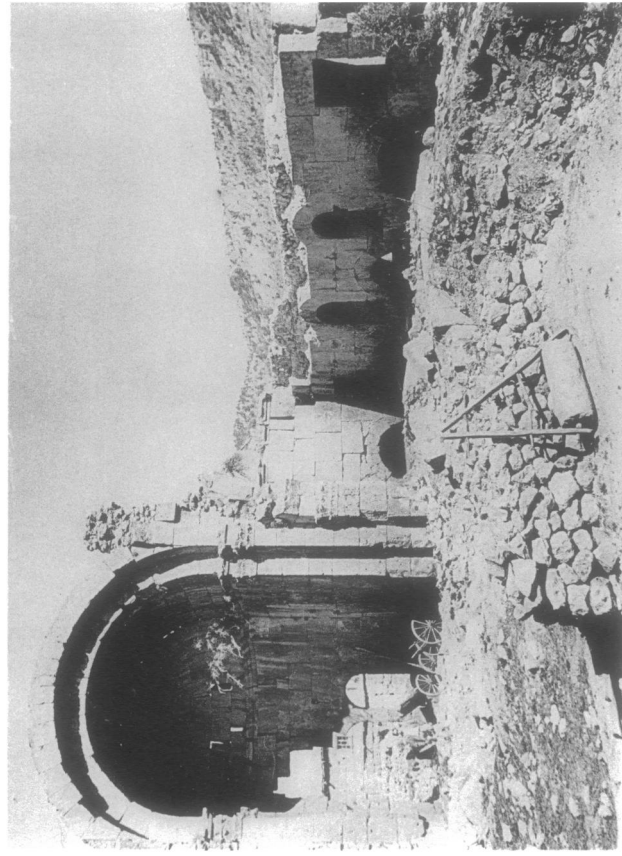
35. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Brackets under niche in northwest corner of tower



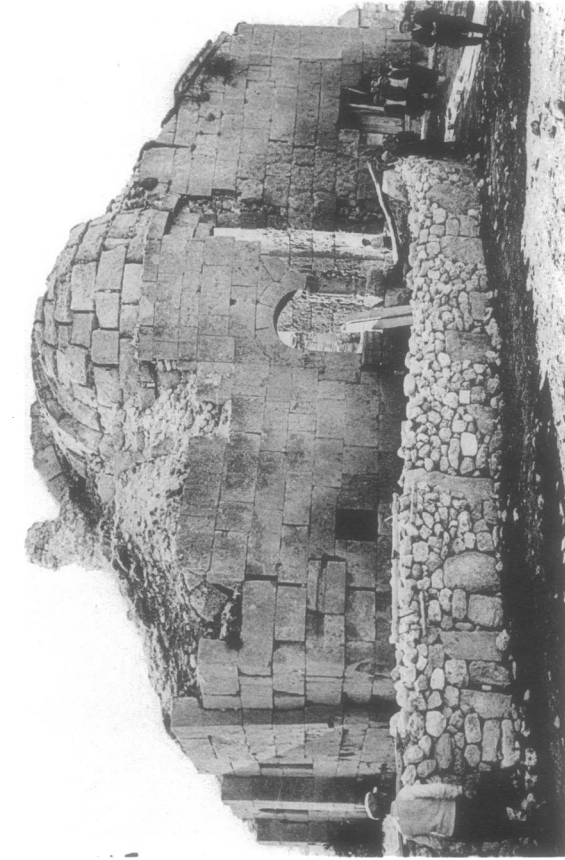
36. Alahan Kilisse. Church. Detail of window in gallery over south aisle, from interior



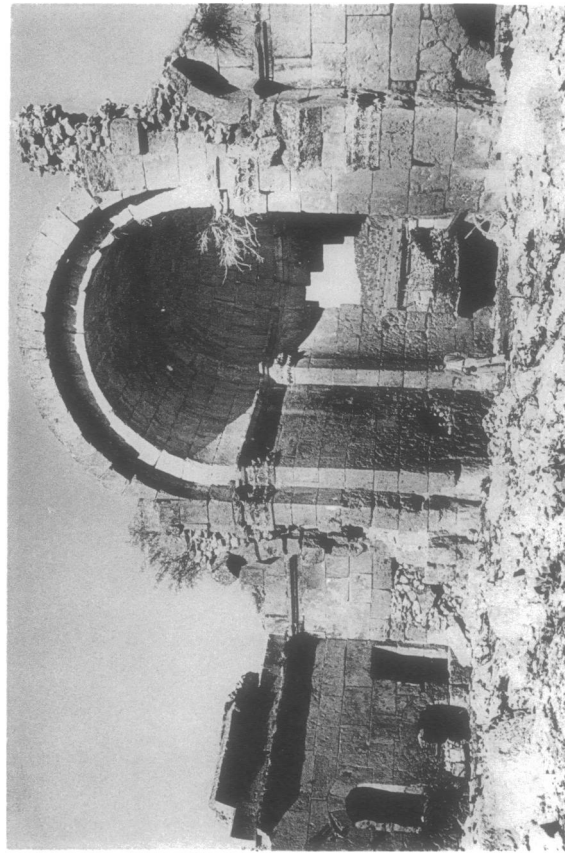
37. Dag Pazarli. Church. View of east end. 1890



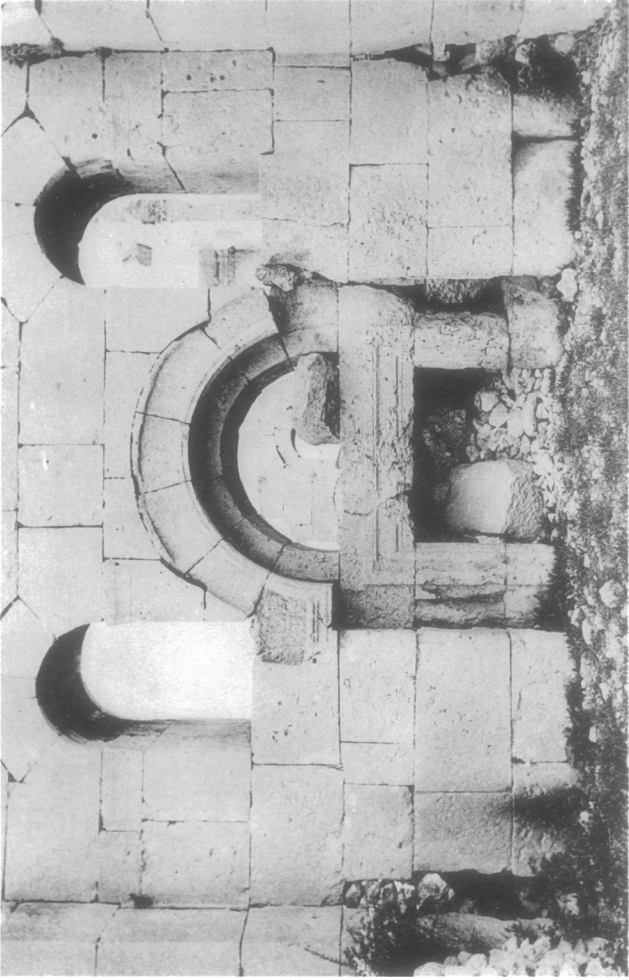
38. Dag Pazarli. Church. Interior, looking southeast



39. Dag Pazarli. Church. View of east end. 1954



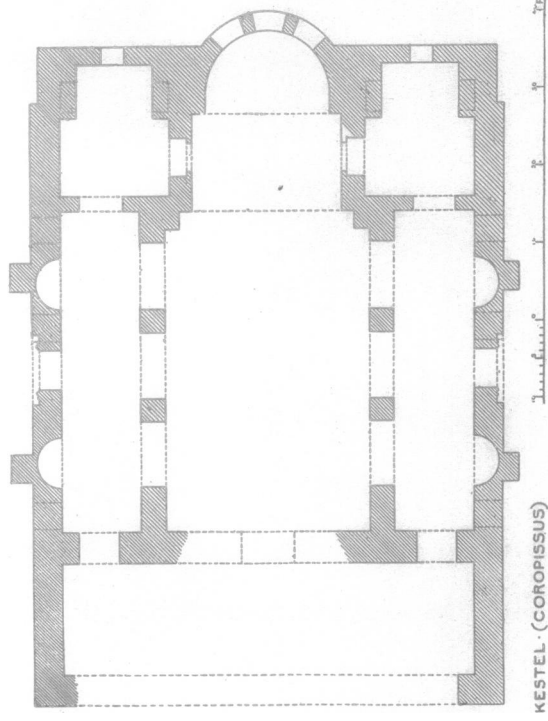
40. Dag Pazarli. Church. Interior, looking northeast



41. Dag Pazarli. Church. South portal, from exterior (note cuttings for an applied porch)



42. Dag Pazarli. Church. Interior of chamber on south side of main apse



43. Dag Pazarli. Church. Plan

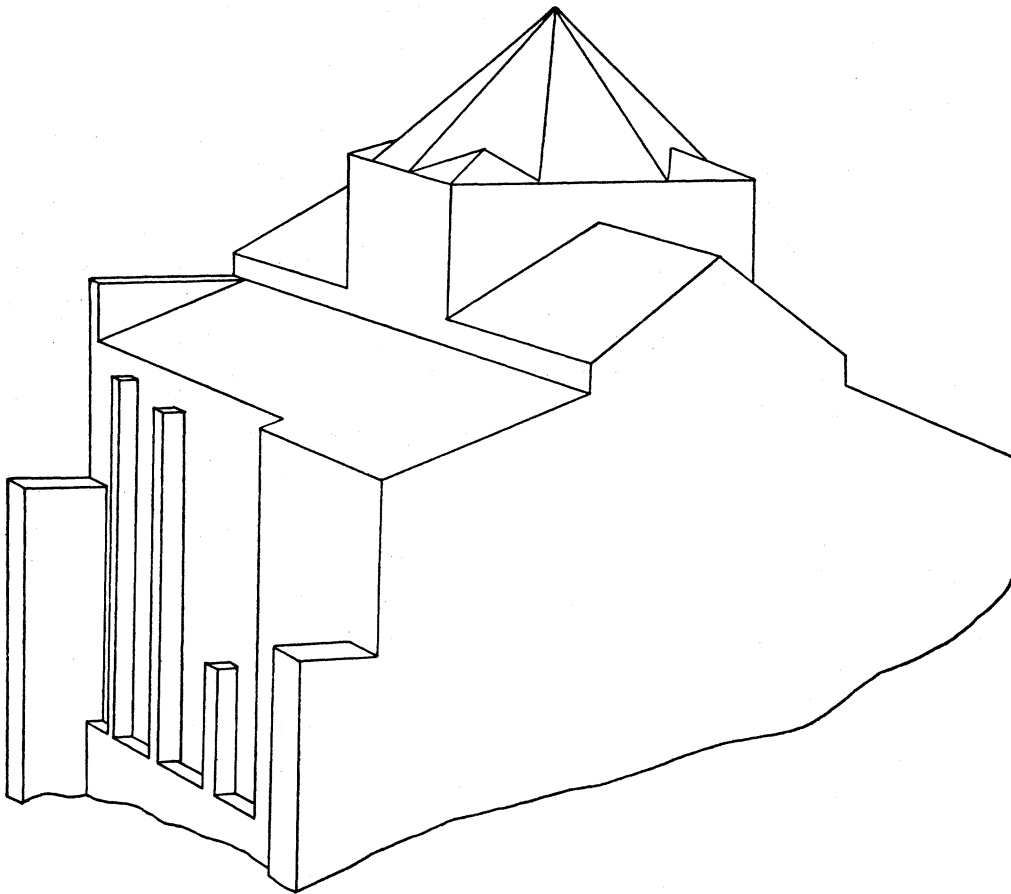


44. Dag Pazarli. Church. Interior of chamber on south side of main apse, looking through door to choir

are no thicker than those used elsewhere in the church to support roofs of wood, the existence of which is proven by beam holes. It is also evident that the elegant corner niches of the tower could not possibly have carried their share of a dome's weight. To my mind, the true solution is the simplest one, namely a squat, pyramidal, wooden roof with flattened half pyramids at the corners (text fig., p. 231).

rose quite high, as indicated by its remaining fragment, which now appears as a free-standing arch. The horizontal parapets at the west ends of the aisles were necessary in order to receive the beams of the roof over the narthex gallery (fig. 15).

Turning now to the structure of the church below the roof, one is impressed by its lightness and dynamic articulation. Within the outer walls, at least, the



Alahan Kilisse. Church. Restoration of roof system

The roofs over the remainder of the church may be restored confidently on the basis of the beam holes mentioned previously (fig. 12). The only doubtful part is the east end which, at first glance, looks as if it might have been covered by a lower roof; but the apse would have needed the protection of a roof, and it

structural principal is one of balancing forces, rather than mass, and finds expression in a system of arcading, delicately poised on slender supports and bearing thin vertical panels of wall. Essentially, the building is a large masonry box whose interior space is compartmentalized by repetition of this

column-arch-wall motif, placed lengthwise and crosswise, and repeated at ground level and at gallery level. The corner niches in the tower have the same skeletal character, which may be compared to the dynamic articulation of Gothic architecture. Even the exterior wall is, to some extent, treated in a similar way, since its remarkable thinness is possible on the long southern side only because of the strip buttresses applied against it. Here again, mass is replaced by articulation. An interesting fact is that this construction, seemingly so precariously balanced, has survived better than the monastic building, whose massive but unyielding walls have been shattered by earth tremors. In both buildings the masonry construction is excellent.

The church is largely hollowed out of the living rock, and its interior seems to have had an appropriately cavernous, dimly lit character.¹³ The sun's rays were filtered through the aisles and narthex and through the galleries over them. Only at two points could windows throw shafts of light directly into the center of the building. A double window opened into the south wall of the tower, and a similar one pierced the main apse. No doubt, the full glow of direct illumination in these two parts tended to merge them into one dominating space, the liturgical focus of the church, lifted up and set off against the rich half-lights and glowing shadows in the multiplicity of surrounding forms and spaces.¹⁴ An in-

¹³ The church is so deeply embedded in the cliff that its whole north wall, up to the top of the gallery, consists of the natural rock face. No practical reason for such a location is apparent. Surely it would have been easier to erect the church a little to the south, perhaps on the axis of the great portico, and thereby avoid such a laborious excavation of rock. There may have been some religious reason, however, for locating the church in its present position. Perhaps it occupies the site of a sacred grotto or replaces a saint's tomb in a cave. Certainly it has the character of a grotto sanctuary.

¹⁴ The adjustment of lighting effects within the church was obviously a matter of great concern to the architect. The large opening in

teresting problem is whether the inner surfaces were covered with paintings which would have added their warm colors to the rich chiaroscuro of the interior space. I saw no evidence of the existence of such paintings.

The architectural style of the church did not seem to me to be "Byzantine," if that appellation be taken to mean the type of architecture developed at Constantinople from the time of Justinian. And to my mind, at least, it suggested neither Rome nor the Orient. Rather, I felt I was in the presence of the old indigenous Hellenistic tradition, still very much alive and adaptable to the solution of new problems. The interior has a noble elegance without being pompous, a richness of decorative detail, of structural inventiveness, and of space composition without being fantastic — in short, that balance between fertile imagination and reasonable moderation which were typical of the best Hellenistic Art.

In plan, the church belongs to the same category as the "Cupola Church" at Meriamlik and the "Tomb Church" at Korykos (figs. 4, 5, 8). Like them, it is essentially a large square, whose eastern half contains a smaller, approximate square which is the nucleus of the plan. Aisles with galleries flank the nucleus and are continued eastward by side chambers, the space between which is filled by the main apse and a choir bay. The western half of the church consists of a short nave, only two bays long, flanked by aisles and galleries.¹⁵ As in

the east face of the tower (fig. 12) was never an exterior window, as indicated by its low level and by the holes for roof beams above it. Evidently it was meant to produce a unity of illumination — and, perhaps, of sound effects — between the tower and the choir. Another interesting fact is that heavy window frames were set into the window openings (fig. 30). One wonders whether the frames carried glass, possibly even stained glass. If so, fragments of glazing would probably be found in excavations within the church.

¹⁵ Apart from the general similarity of the three churches, they are comparable in other respects. Thus, the plan of the church at Alahan

the other two churches, the nucleus dominates the design, in plan as well as in vertical composition. It is the core of the building around which aisles, galleries, and nave bays are arranged in subservient fashion. Its commanding, almost exclusive character is emphasized by low parapets which separate its floor area from the aisles and by railings which once stood above these parapets, as indicated by mortise holes in piers and columns. A similar railing once divided it from the nave, and this demarcation was probably made even more emphatic by the presence of some important object, perhaps a reliquary or a great cross, standing between the two. A monumental stone pedestal now lies in the north aisle in such a position as to suggest that it has tumbled from a point under the center of the arch which separates the nave from the tower, and a conspicuous liturgical object, perhaps of metal, is the most likely explanation for such an imposing base (figs. 11, 17).¹⁶ If this conjecture is correct, the chancel of the church would have included the main apse, the choir bay, and the entire area under the tower, and would have been surrounded on three sides by the aisles, the galleries, and the short nave. The liturgical area seems to have monop-

olized the whole core of the church.

Thus far, only two pieces of documentary evidence are available to date the group of buildings at Alahan Kilisse. Both of them are funerary inscriptions concerned with a monk named Tarasis, who is described as the donor of a guest house and who died in 462.¹⁷ Since a guest house would hardly have been erected at the site before a church and since no earlier church is in evidence, we might conclude that the present one existed before 462. The style of the decorative details (figs. 24-27, 30, 32-36), however, suggests for it and for all the other buildings on the site a later date. My own impression is that they are contemporary with the "Tomb Church" at Korykos and belong to the period of Justinian. Only excavations and a thorough survey could solve the problem.

DAG PAZARLI

This small village is situated higher in the Taurus than Alahan Kilisse, and was reached from Mut by a vertiginous mountain track which wound through pine forests and past snow banks glistening in the April sun. Even the capacities of a small military type of car were tested to the utmost in making the ascent. The trip was well worth the effort, however, because the church is extraordinary, even in its lamentable present state, verging on complete disintegration (figs. 28, 29, 31, 37-44). Headlam, who stopped here in 1890, devotes only a few lines of text to it, but fortunately he includes a plan and reproduces an excellent photograph of the exterior (figs. 37, 43).¹⁸ A comparison between the latter and my own picture, taken from almost the same point of view, in-

Kilisse resembles the final phase of the "Tomb Church" at Korykos in having a flat east end and is similar to the "Cupola Church" at Meriamlik in having a transverse alignment of apse and side chambers, although the Meriamlik church differs in having neither a choir bay nor a flat eastern end. Like the Korykos church and, probably, the Meriamlik church, Alahan Kilisse has galleries over its aisles and side chambers. The feature which conforms least to type in these three churches is the two-aisled, transverse nave of the "Tomb Church" at Korykos. Otherwise they constitute a quite homogeneous group.

¹⁶ The base lies on its side under the northern nave arcade (in fig. 11 the person seated on the right is leaning against its top.) Its form does not seem appropriate for an altar, and its present position at the end of the church opposite the main apse would be hard to explain if it were an altar. The top surface is countersunk as if to receive a round object of metal.

¹⁷ Michael Gough, "Some Recent Finds at Alahan (Koja Kalessi)," *Anatolian Studies. Journal of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara*, V (1955), pp. 115-118.

¹⁸ Headlam, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21, figs. 9, 10. Headlam also uses the name "Kestel" for this site.

dicates the change that has occurred since then.

On first entering the church, the writer felt a curious sensation of encountering an old friend on this remote plateau. The resemblance to Romanesque architecture in Provence is striking. Here is the same generous massiveness combined with restrained simplicity of geometric forms, the same dignified largeness of scale, the same love of the architectural medium, the tangible stone, that made every block an object of special study, every expanse of wall intrinsically desirable, and caused vaults, niches, and ornaments to be turned, hollowed, and drilled with a sculptor's care. Such a resemblance might almost win one's allegiance to theories of the remote Asiatic origins of Romanesque architecture.

Subsequent travels in the interior of Asia Minor cured me of such wild surmises. As I moved farther inland, to Maden Sheher (Bin-Bir-Kilisse) and to the churches around Kayseri, I felt I was withdrawing from the radiating center of this style, rather than approaching it. Surely these are mere rustic copies, deep in the hinterland, of architectural developments along the south coast. The church at Dag Pazarli, although somewhat farther inland than the churches at Meriamlik, Korykos, and Alahan Kilisse, is still within the coastal area and certainly belongs in their orbit of style. Its tunnel vaults follow the same system of construction wherein carefully fitted voussoirs are backed by a massive rubble fill similar to Roman concrete (figs. 3, 39, 40). Its arches are variously of semicircular and of horseshoe form, as is the case at Alahan Kilisse (figs. 11, 41, 44). In design and decorative pattern, its pilaster capitals are reminiscent of those in the "Tomb Church" at Korykos (figs. 23, 28), and, even in such small details as moldings and leaf ornament, it can be compared to Alahan Kilisse (figs. 26, 27, 29).

More striking than similarities of structural method and decorative detail is the resemblance in basic design between Dag Pazarli and three of the churches discussed previously. Like the "Cupola Church" at Meriamlik, the "Tomb Church" at Korykos, and the church at Alahan Kilisse, the scheme of Dag Pazarli consists essentially of a towerlike nucleus standing within a great square, the nucleus being flanked by side aisles and set against the east face of the outer square in order to be near the main apse, which is accompanied by side chambers. This relationship is clear in figures 12 and 37; in both cases the nucleus can be seen thrusting up from the eastern part of the outer square, against which the apse and side chambers are applied in a transverse alignment. The most important distinction between Dag Pazarli and the other three churches is that the nucleus, as recorded by Headlam, is oblong rather than a true square and therefore occupies, with its flanking aisles, far more than half of the outer square (figs. 4, 5, 8, 43). Such a variation is a matter of proportion rather than basic system. Indeed, one of the other churches shows a similar tendency: the nucleus at Alahan Kilisse is also oblong, although less emphatically so.¹⁹

In spite of the ruined state of the church at Dag Pazarli, enough remains to permit us, with the help of Headlam's photograph, to conjecture as to the original form of its superstructure. Figures 38 and 40 indicate that the nucleus rose far above the aisle arcades and was framed on its north, east, and south sides by great arches, whose springs are still visible. We may assume that a corresponding arch bordered its western side also.²⁰ The main problem is to determine

¹⁹ Following are the approximate ground plan dimensions (interior) of the nucleus in each of the four churches: Meriamlik, 10.60 x 10.65 m.; Korykos, 12 x 12 m.; Alahan Kilisse, 6.80 x 5.70 m.; Dag Pazarli 11.00 x 7.00 m.

²⁰ Headlam's plan (fig. 43) does not show the responds, in the angles of the two western

what rested on the great arches and what spanned the space between them. The answer is, I believe, almost certain. The arches must have carried vertical walls which rose to the height of the cornice still visible in Headlam's photograph (fig. 37), and the space between these four walls surely must have been spanned by a simple pyramidal roof of wood, like the one we have imagined at Alahan Kilisse, even though the base of this one would have been more oblong. To arrive at this conclusion, we may begin with the arch springs on the eastern side (figs. 38, 40). The re-entrant angles between the springs continue upward as simple interior corners without any trace of groins or pendentives. Next we may note that the upward sweep of the north and south springs is far more steep than that of the eastern ones, as befitting the much greater span of the north and south arches. Turning now to Headlam's photograph (fig. 37), we realize that the crown of the eastern arch of the nucleus would be lower than the roof of the choir, but the crowns of the north and south arches, being a couple of meters higher, would have risen nearly to the level of the cornice at the top of the nucleus. Consequently, no room is left for a vault or dome to spring above the north and south arches, and the only alternative is a wooden roof, which would probably have had a pyramidal rather than a gable form, for the cornice of the nucleus was clearly horizontal all around and no evidence of a ramping cornice is visible in the photograph.

I see no escape from the logic of the above, unless we assume that the horizontal molding, which is visible at the top of the nucleus in figure 37 and which I have called a cornice, was in reality a mere string course, above which rose

piers, which would carry such an arch, but they may have been destroyed or buried before his visit. In all probability, the western piers originally repeated the form of the eastern ones in order to carry the north and south arches.

another story containing a vault or dome. But the cornices found elsewhere on the building are identical with this molding in form and size. Moreover, string courses are not used on any other part of the exterior. Therefore it seems almost certain that the church combined a wood-roofed central space with tunnel-vaulted peripheral spaces.²¹ Incidentally, the location of the aisle vaults is such as to preclude galleries over them, or even a clerestory. The interior must have been remarkably dim, resembling in this respect the church at Alahan Kilisse.

The western end of the Dag Pazarli church is completely levelled, and must have been so even before Headlam's visit, if we may judge by the blank areas on his plan and by the improbable form he has given to the western piers (see footnote 20). Curiously enough, his drawing of that part of the building omits one important element which was quite evident when I was there, although it may not have been visible in his day. The upper surface of a large apse can be observed at the present ground level. It is at the west end of the church, opposite the eastern apse, and its chord is located approximately along the line where Headlam shows the wall of the west façade. In size, it is comparable to the eastern one, so that the oblong nucleus of the church may have been terminated by balancing apses at each end, while its straight sides were flanked by arcades.²² If so, its plan would have been comparable to the square structure

²¹ Here, as at Alahan Kilisse, niches may have been thrown across the corners of the central space so as to support the corner panels of an octagonal wooden pyramid. The combination of a wood-roofed central space with tunnel-vaulted peripheral spaces is similar to the system I have suggested for the "Cupola Church" at Meriamlik (see above).

²² Unfortunately, I did not notice this important piece of evidence until the last moment, when the sun was already setting and my guide was becoming peremptory about our departure before night should obscure the mountain pass we still had to traverse. Hence I could not measure or photograph the western apse.

which occupied the center of the "Tomb Church" at Korykos and which was apparently flanked by straight arcades on its north and south sides and by two apsidal forms, one on the east and the other on the west (see above). Only by excavations could the plans of both these churches be ascertained and their resemblance verified.

The date of the church at Dag Pazarli can only be conjectured. On the basis of its resemblance in plan, construction, and ornamental detail to the churches at Korykos and Alahan Kilisse, we may reasonably assign it to the same period and infer that it was erected, like them, in the sixth century.

In concluding these travel notes, I should like to emphasize again their tentative character. They were made almost literally on the run. Even so, I hope to have conveyed to the reader some impression of the interest and importance of Early Byzantine architecture in Cilicia. In particular, the church with compact nucleus, whose form is akin to the central type of church, appears to be indigenous to the region, and may

have originated there. My impression is that the space under the tower was developed as the architectural setting for a richly elaborated liturgy and was designed as an appropriate "heavenly mansion" in which the ritual could unfold its splendid spectacle. The lay congregation seems to have been restricted to peripheral aisles and galleries or, at most, to have had the use of an abbreviated nave. Apart from such intrinsically interesting developments of plan and liturgical function, the fifth- and sixth-century architecture of the region deserves to be related to the general history of Early Byzantine style. This is no provincial school, reflecting dimly and tardily the creative efforts of more progressive architectural centers. It seems, rather, to have maintained its own independence and originality, based on local traditions, in spite of new architectural influences flowing powerfully from the capital of the Empire. A history of Early Byzantine architecture in the coastal cities and monastic centers of Cilicia would be an important and vigorous chapter in the general history of Byzantine architecture.